

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill 6303
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Friends of New Britain Animal Control

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Raised Bill 6303, An Act Concerning Municipal Animal Shelters.

I have worked as a Veterinary technician in the past and recently started a volunteer based group called "Friends of New Britain Animal Control." Our original mission was to work *with* local Animal Control to assist in placing the dogs at the New Britain pound, which would in turn, reduce the euthanasia rate. However, after volunteering there on a weekly basis for over 2 years, we have seen numerous cases of dogs that have been neglected. Despite the fact that the City has a budget for veterinary care, its often not used and dogs are left to sit in the pound untreated. I have personally witnessed dogs go without simple and inexpensive antibiotics to others who were literally dying in their kennel rather than being humanely euthanized to spare them the suffering. There is simply no excuse for a living animal to be allowed to suffer or die in pain. Through personal experience in dealing with Animal Control Officers, it is my belief that there are *some* who have become callous to their position in Animal Control. Others simply have no interest in this field and do it to collect a paycheck. These Animal Control Officers need to be held accountable for allowing animals to suffer needlessly and this is the reason I strongly support this Bill.

This past summer, there were two dogs in particular that were denied urgent veterinary care and were left to suffer in pain for days. Our group named one Montana and the other Francis, after St. Francis the patron Saint. Montana was a VERY friendly, adoptable, young dog. Aside from his wounds, he was otherwise healthy. Unfortunately, Montana was attacked by numerous other dogs which inflicted many puncture wounds and torn skin. He was brought to the pound by the ACO but was never brought to a Veterinarian. When the ACO pointed him out to me during a visit there, he informed me that he had already been there a couple of days. The temperature was over 90 degree's and I observed flies landing on his wounds. I explained to the ACO that the dog needed urgent medical care consisting of pain medication and antibiotics. I was told that he would not bring the dog to a Vet. I explained that it is not uncommon for the flies to infect the wound thus creating a more severe infection. I gave Montana an antiseptic rinse and lathered him with triple antibiotic ointment which I had left at the pound. Montana was at the pound for over 4 days without pain medication and treatment. After the 4 days, my group was able to take him and place him with a rescue that would provide the medical treatment he so badly needed.

Francis however, was not so lucky. He was picked up by the ACO and brought to the pound. Instead of going to the pound, he should have been brought directly to a Veterinarian. He was severely emaciated at approximately 17lbs when he should have been over 60lbs. I found him curled up in the corner of his kennel on the cement floor. He was so malnourished and lethargic that he could not even lift his head. In addition, he had a severe skin infection which left him bleeding on his inner thighs. The rest of his skin was scabbed and itchy. Poor Francis could not even lift his leg however, to scratch his scabbed skin. When I noticed Francis at the pound, he had been there slowly dying, for 2 days. Outraged at the amount of suffering this dog had been forced to endure both prior to the pound as well as in it, I immediately put him in my car and brought him to a Vet to be humanely euthanized to end his pain and suffering.

Although I have done my best to describe what the above animals went through, it is important to know that no amount of detailed writing could ever capture the pain and suffering that I witnessed in these helpless animals eyes. Animals that depend on us for help. Often, individuals turn away because they can't hear about these realities which pound dogs face. As a result, I often find myself conveying the following quote from Albert Schweitzer; "Think occasionally of the suffering of which you spare yourself the sight." With this testimony, I ask you to just consider that quote. The suffering these animals endure is real and it happens more often than one would think. I often wonder how many animals suffered without medical care before I started volunteering in New Britain Animal Control. We cannot change the suffering that past animals have gone through, but with this legislation we *can* prevent needless suffering in the future. To spare an animal unnecessary pain and suffering, when you have a budget as well as rescue groups to help, *should be* common sense. For some however, it is not and that is why I strongly urge you to support Bill 6303. YOU have the power to make the difference that will hold negligent ACO's accountable and help animals who depend on people to get the proper medical care they need.

Thank You,

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